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Letter from Walter Taylor to Adjutant General Mauran

At the outbreak of the Civil War, individual states were required to provide troops to support the Union. Faced with gathering thousands of soldiers from his small state, Rhode Island Governor William Sprague authorized the formation of a regiment to be comprised completely of "colored citizens." African American men from neighboring states who were not permitted to serve in their own state's regiments wrote to the Governor and Adjutant General to see if they could enlist in the Rhode Island regiment. (The Adjutant General was responsible for recruiting people to fill the regiment.)

Office of Ives, Clarke & Co.,
52 Warren Street

New York, August, 9, 1862

Dear Sir

Will you please inform me if the "Colored" Regiment now being organized in Rhode Island is to be Officered by Colored Men. If so have the full Complement of Officers been appointed for said Regiment?

Will residents of another state be received and what Qualifications are necessary?
Who should applications be made to?

I am a Colored Citizen of New York, at the breaking out of the War I with several Hundred others enrolled myself and tendered our services to the Government for the benefit of the cause of our common country, to assist in rescuing it from the hands of Traitors and Rebels.

You are well aware the Government refused to accept the services of colored men. Learning from an authentic source that Gov Sprague of Rhode Island, had Issued orders for the formation of such a Regiment composed entirely of colored men, and being anxious to serve my country in this in this her hour of Peril I now tender my services to the Gov of your state. If there are any vacancies as captain or lieutenant I would offer myself for such post subject to the Rules and Regulations of the service.

As to reference ~~to myself~~, I would refer to J. Hasford Smith Esq. late Turkish consul for this city, now Private Secretary to His Honor Mayor Opdyke.

An answer is respectfully solicited,
by your humble servant
Walter J. Taylor

EC Mauran Esq.
Please direct to care of Ives, Clarke & Co., 52 Warren St.

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